

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OIC-02 AF-10 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12
NEA-10 CU-02 AGRE-00 DOTE-00 HEW-04 HUD-01 INT-05
FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 ERDA-05 COME-00
EB-07 EPA-01 INR-07 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00
USIA-06 SS-15 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 DHA-02 /136 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2140

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

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NAIROBI FOR USDEL TO UNEP

MANILA FOR SEIFMAN USDEL TO UNICEF

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, ESCAP

SUBJ: ESCAP REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

REF: BANGKOK 10223

1. SUMMARY. THE ESCAP HUMAN SETTLEMENTS CONFERENCE
SPENT MOST OF ITS ENGERGY AND TIME ON NATIONAL PROGRAMS
AND IN DISCUSSING VARIOUS REGIONAL MECHANISMS, FINALLY
RECOMMENDING (A) THE CREATION OF AN INTERGEOVERNMENTAL
EXPERT WORKING GROUP, (B) POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE, AND (C) REVSION OF THE EXISTING
TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TITLE OF THE ESCAP COMMITTEE ON
INDUSTRY, HOUSING AND TECHNOLOGY TO EXPLICITLY INCLUDE
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. EVEN THESE PROPOSALS (A-C) ARE
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TENTATIVE AND WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (ACPR), IN WHICH WE
PARTICIPATE, BEFORE FINALIZATION. THE CONFERENCE DEVOTED
MINIMAL TIME DISCUSSING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL
ARRANGEMENTS, AND, PER POSITION PAPER INSTRUCTIONS, NO
RECOMMENDATION EMERGED SUPPORTING ANY SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVE
TO THE HABITAT FOLLOW-UP FOR THE GLOBAL INSTITUTION.

END SUMMARY.

2. THE ESCAP REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENT FOLLOW-UP MET FROM 9-14 MAY AND FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES AS WELL AS THE POTENTIAL FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION. MANY OF SUBSTANTIVE DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTED AT THE HABITAT CONFERENCE STILL REMAINED IN THE REGIONAL MEETING, WITH THE DEBATE (AND REPORT) REFLECTING CONTINUED DIFFICULTY IN DEFINING WHAT THE LIMITATIONS OF "HUMAN SETTLEMENTS" AS A CONCEPT SHOULD BE. THE CONFERENCE BUREAU WAS COMPOSED AS FOLLOWS: CHAIRMAN, THAILAND; VICE CHAIRMAN, IRAN; RAPporteur, PAPUA NEW GUINEA; DRAFTING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, AUSTRALIA.

3. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AN INTERVENTION BY CANADA (ATTENDING IN AN OBSERVER CAPACITY) MOST DELEGATIONS WERE RELATIVELY SILENT ON THIS ISSUE AND NOT VERY WELL INFORMED OR CONCERNED ABOUT RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER OF UN INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL. THEY APPEARED ANXIOUS TO HAVE ESCAP MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN HUMAN SETTLEMENT PROBLEMS, WITH MOST VIEWING THE REGIONAL LEVEL AS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF GENERALITY IN ADDRESSING HUMAN SETTLEMENT PROBLEMS. SEVERAL DID MAKE APPRECIATIVE REFERENCES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM (UNEP) AND THE UN HABITAT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS FOUNDATION (FOUNDATION), BUT THESE WERE MADE PRIMARILY BECAUSE UNEP/FOUNDATION WERE SUBSIDIZING SOME OF THE POOREST COUNTRY ATTENDANCE AT THE CONFERENCE AND/OR WERE FUNDING COUNTRY PROGRAMS MANAGED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE. (THE CENTRE FOR HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING WAS REPRESENTED ONLY BY A CONSULTANT CURRENTLY INVOLVED WITH A PROJECT IN INDONESIA. HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE NUANCES OF THE GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM BUT, BECAUSE OF THE NATURE AND DIRECTION OF THE CONFERENCE, CHBP DID NOT SUFFER FROM LACK OF HIGHER REPRESENTATION.) THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT WERE VAGUE AND SHOULD NOT HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON THE DEBATE OF GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AT THE 63RD ECOSOC.

4. REGIONAL MECHANISMS. IN CONSIDERING REGIONAL MECHANISMS, IT WAS PROPOSED THEY SHOULD BE BASED ON NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS HARMONIZED WITH PROGRAMS TO BE IMPLEMENTED FROM AVAILABLE PROGRAMS OPERATED BY UN ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ACTIVITIES. DISCUSSION CENTERED ON THE NEED FOR THE PREPARATION OF A DETAILED DIRECTORY OF AVAILABLE INPUTS TO BE ANALYZED AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL AND MATCHED WITH THE NATIONAL NEEDS

TO ESTABLISH A TENTATIVE REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR PRESENTATION TO A TECHNICAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXPERT WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (COMPOSITION OF THE SPECIFIC EXPERTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS.) FYI: THERE WAS NO INDICATION OF ANY INTENTION TO IN ANY WAY LIMIT THE SELECTION OF COUNTRY EXPERTS TO ANY SPECIFIC GROUP. END FYI. ITS RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, HOUSING AND TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHER ESCAP GOVERNMENTAL BODIES WHICH MIGHT HAVE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS COMPONENTS. THE CONFERENCE AGREED ESCAP SHOULD BE THE FOCAL POINT FOR COORDINATION ACTIVITIES AND SUGGESTED THE CREATION OF AN INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE TO ENSURE COORDINATION AMONG UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND BODIES LOCATED IN THE REGION. THE TASK FORCE WOULD ALSO ACT AS A TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP AND CARRY OUT SPECIFIC TASKS ASSIGNED TO IT, SUCH AS REVIEWING REQUESTS SUBMITTED BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

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AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. IT WOULD BE THE MACHINERY IN THE REGION FOR COORDINATING THE EFFORTS OF ESCAP, UN AGENCIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS SHARING IN THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS FOR THE ESCAP REGION. INHERENT IN THIS PROPOSAL IS THE SUPERVISORY ROLE OF THE ACPR IN ASSISTING THE ESCAP EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS AND BALANCE THE WORK PROGRAM AND PRIORITIES, AS WELL AS IN KEEPING THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS INFORMED OF PROGRESS.

5. PRIVATE/PUBLIC SECTOR ISSUES. WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED EARLY DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT (SEE REFTEL). DESPITE LAST MINUTE SOVIET EFFORTS IN PLENARY TO EMPHASIZE ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, THIS SUBJECT WAS TREATED IN THE FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT TO OUR SATISFACTION. IN VIEW, IT INCLUDES A BALANCED STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS IN PROVIDING SHELTER TO THE DISADVANTAGED SECTORS OF SOCIETY, AND, WITH REGARD TO THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN LAND USE, THE REPORT STATES IN PERTINENT PART, QUOTE GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF LAND UNDER DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF ADMINISTRATION WAS RECOGNIZED AS AN AREA FOR SPECIFIC ATTENTION AND STUDY UNQUOTE.

6 UN ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE. ON BALANCE, THE ESCAP SECRETARIAT PLAYED A FUNDAMENTALLY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE CONFERENCE, WITH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPRESENTATIVE (ABID HUSSAIN) ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE DEBATE AND SEEKING VALIANTLY TO BRING DISCUSSION BACK ON COURSE WHEN IT DRIFTED. (SECOND LEVEL ESCAP SUPPORT WAS WEAK.) UNEP/FOUNDATION HAD TWO REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT AT THE CONFERENCE. THEIR GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT CONTAINED MANY PROMISING REMARKS ABOUT WHAT UNEP/FOUNDATION COULD DO FOR COUNTRIES

AND THE REGION, BUT THEY RETREATED WHEN CONFRONTED WITH
EFFORTS TO TIE THEIR IMPLICIT PROMISES TO FINANCIAL
COMMITMENTS. UNDP VERY CLEARLY AVOIDED MAKING ANY
PROMISES/COMMITMENTS AND RESERVED THEIR POSITION WITH
REGARD TO ANY DIRECTIVE THE ESCAP CONFERENCE MIGHT ENDORSE
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IN TERMS OF UNDP POLICY FUNDING ORIENTATIONS. THE CHBP
CAME IN FOR SOME CRITICISM IN TERMS OF THE QUALITY OF A
REPORT THEY PREPARED FOR THE ESCAP CONFERENCE (TOO ABSTRACT),
BUT NEITHER THE REPORT NOR CHBP CAME UNDER CAREFUL SCUTINY.

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OIC-02 AF-10 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12
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FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 ERDA-05 COME-00
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7. COUNTRY PERFORMANCES. THE INDIANS AND SRI LANKANS
WERE IRREPRESSIBLE IN PURSUING ESOTERIC POINTS WHICH
ADDED MUDDLE RATHER THAN LIGHT TO THE REPORT. THE
JAPANESE DELEGATE (KUROKAWA) TOOK LEGALISTIC POSITIONS WHICH
FOR THE MOST PART WERE HELPFUL IN TIGHTENING THE CONFERENCE
REPORT ALTHOUGH THE LOST POINTS BY BEING FAR TOO DOGMATIC.
THE AUSTRALIAN (PETERS) WAS TECHNICAL/DRAFTING COMMITTEE
CHARIMAN, AND HE WAS IN THE DRIVERS SEAT FOR MOST OF THE
REPORT DRAFTING EXERCISE. AUSTRALIA AND, TO A LESSER

DEGREE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND FIJI WERE ACTIVE IN SEEKING TO ENSURE EQUAL TREATMENT AND IN DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE UNIQUE PROBLEMS OF THE PACIFIC SUB-REGION. NEW ZEALAND ALSO PRESSED THIS POINT. THE RUSSIANS WERE REPRESENTED BY TWO REASONABLY HIGH LEVEL TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS (G.;. ILINSKI, V.P. OF ARCHITECT UNION OF USSR AND A. T. ZAKHAROV, CHIEF OF SECTION, RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE) BOTH OF WHOM SPOKE ENGLISH, AND FOR THE MOST PART THEY WERE SUBSTANTIVE AND APOLITICAL. AS NOTED IN PARA 5, HOWEVER, THEY DID HAVE A FIRM POSITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON THE PUBLIC CONTROL OF LAND QUESTION. VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA DID NOT SHOW AND NO SPECIFIC REFERENCES WERE MADE TO THE MOR THE MEKONG DELTA COMMISSION IN THE REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE ITSELF. THE ABSENCE OF A SIGNIFICANT PHILIPPINE PRESENCE WAS SURPRISING BOTH TO US AND THE SECRETARIAT. (WE UNDERSTOOD THAT UP UNTIL TUESDAY, 10 MAY, A PHILIPPINE DELEGATION OF FIVE WAS STILL EXPECTED, BUT IN FACT NONE CAME FROM MANILA AND ONLY A REPORTING OFFICER FROM THEIR EMBASSY APPEARED ON THE THRD DAY.) SOME NATIONAL JEALOUSY AROSE BETWEEN THE INDONESIAN AND INDIAN DELEGATES AS THEY BOTH SOUGHT PRIORITY ATTENTION FOR THEIR EXISTING REGIONAL CENTERS FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. THEIR TRANSPARENT EAGERNESS TO EXPAND THESE ACTIVITIES DELAYED APPROVAL OF THE FINAL DRAFT REPORT.

8. COMMENT. SOME MODEST PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD THE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROBLEM AND THE CONFERENCE WAS PROBABLY USEFUL TO COUNTRY DELEGATIONS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO FOLLOW-UP ON HABITAT IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES AND IN THE REGION IS A MORE LIKELY PROSPECT. THE ESCAP REGION SEEMED LESS EXERCISED OVER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGMENTS THAN ECLA, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THE CHIEF REGIONAL CONTENDER FOR SOME PORTION OF THE GLOBAL ARRANGEMENT WAS NOT SERIOUSLY REPRESENTED (PHILIPPINES).

9. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT REFTTEL (BANGKOK 10223) TO USUN, NEW YORK.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2511734
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ESCAP REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
TAGS: OCON, TH, ESCAP
To: STATE
Type: TE
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